

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES STATE UNITS PLANS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO TRANSITIONING

Transition

DVR's role in transition is identified in the Interagency Agreement with the state's Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The agreement facilitates the development of a student's long term employment and independent living, outreach provisions, lead agency responsibilities, and how students with disabilities who are not in special education programs can access vocational rehabilitation services. This agreement describes the roles and responsibilities of both DPI and DVR with respect to transitioning. This includes language that helps to clarify which agency (the school or DVR) has the primary responsibility to obtain funding for needed transition services.

The Division has renewed our agreement with DPI in 2004. The agreement commits DVR to the development of the Plan for Employment prior to the eligible and interested student leaving school. Consistent with agency-wide policy and procedures, the plan for employment includes the development of intermediate goals and long term objectives. The agreement allows VR staff involvement in the IEP process without officially opening the file and assures counselor involvement once the student has been found eligible and in an open category. The agreement encourages the development of local agreements.

This renewed agreement has five overall goals:

1. to comply with federal legal mandates
2. to provide practical guidance to special and general education teachers, nurses, psychologists and guidance counselors on the topic of transition
3. to provide practical guidance to vocational rehabilitation counselors on the topic of transition
4. to provide information on the topic of transition to students and their parents so they can participate fully in transition
5. to provide clarification of roles and responsibilities of schools and DVR relative to transition

Although the agreement is binding only on:

1. schools to the extent that they provide educational services to students in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) and
2. on the division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) insofar as it provides vocational services to eligible persons with disabilities who are not on a waiting list under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1998,

It is the recommendation of the Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation that, to the extent possible and feasible, transition services be provided to all students with disabilities, regardless of their eligibility under IDEA or DVR.

Believing that transition is not merely a mandate, but a process of positive value to students with disabilities, DPI and DVR encourage teachers, guidance counselors and vocational rehabilitation counselors to be as inclusive as possible and to seek out resources and strategies to replicate the IDEA/VR transition model for all students with disabilities.

Outreach

Wisconsin DVR will designate a liaison counselor to each school building identified by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as a referral source for DVR applicants. The role of the DVR liaison counselor for outreach includes seeking out students in need, and providing ongoing education of LEA staff to encourage routine referrals of potentially eligible students. There is specific language in the Agreement on the need to assure that those students who are not special education students can access services. DVR liaisons are responsible for talking with guidance counselors about referring these students to DVR. DVR liaison counselors are also responsible to provide technical assistance, as requested, to referral sources prior to the referral of students, on the strategies for determining appropriate post-secondary objectives and information and referral services related to the same.

With respect to qualified staff, current state law requires Rehabilitation Counselors and school personnel to be certified or licensed. The Department of Regulation and Licensing certifies DVR counselors, and DPI licenses school personnel.

Copies of the DVR/DPI agreement are available on request.